Improving Our Community Outreach and Engagement to Improve Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities
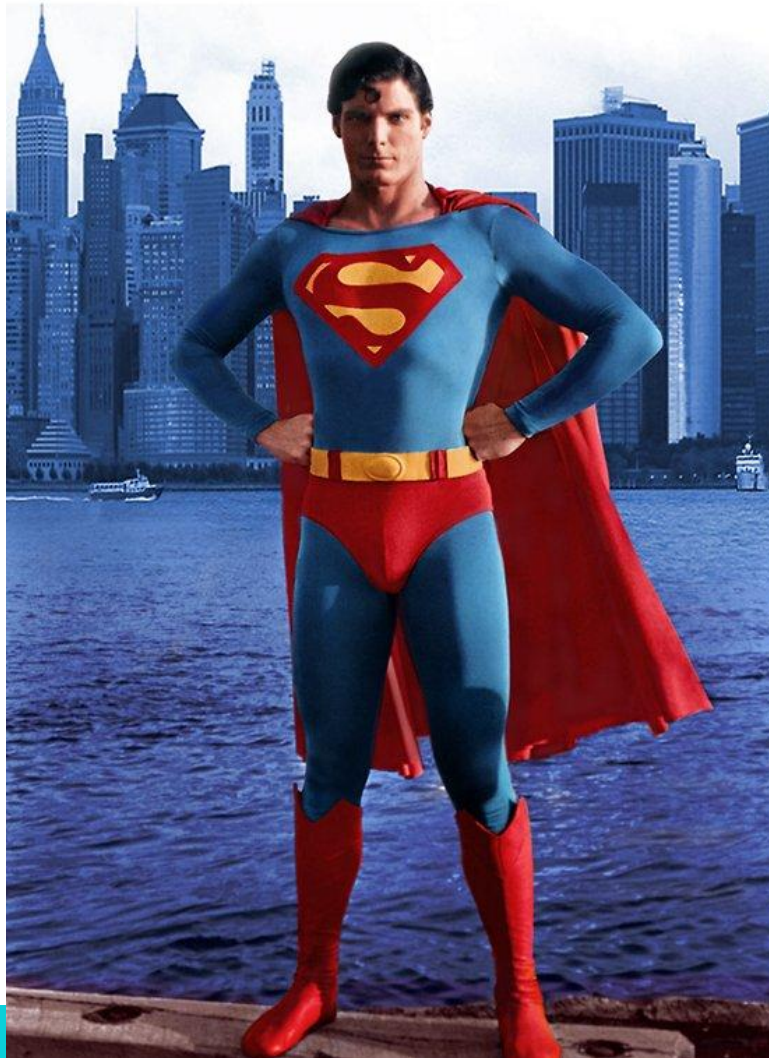
Building Bridges IV Team

Today's objectives

- We will highlight that we are in this together!
- We will learn the importance of building Partnerships
- We will acknowledge The Community Engagement Model
  - Assessment
  - Building Relationships
  - Communication
  - We will define Cultural Brokering, provide example of a local demonstration
  - We will brainstorm ideas for our respective organizations in mind

Sometimes it feels like…

Why partner?
Relationships Matter

McElroy KR, Bibeau D, Steckler A, Glanz . An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly* 15:351-377, 1988.

Authentic Partnerships – how do you know?

- All partners have power

- All partners have mission statements

- A common goal larger than any one partner

- Community partners are grounded in the community

- Institutional partners are committed to working with community partners

Labonte R. (1997) Community, Community Development and the Forming of Authentic Partnerships: Some Critical Reflections. Chapter in Community Organizing & Community Building for Health. Minkler M ed. Rutgers University Press New Brunswick NJ.
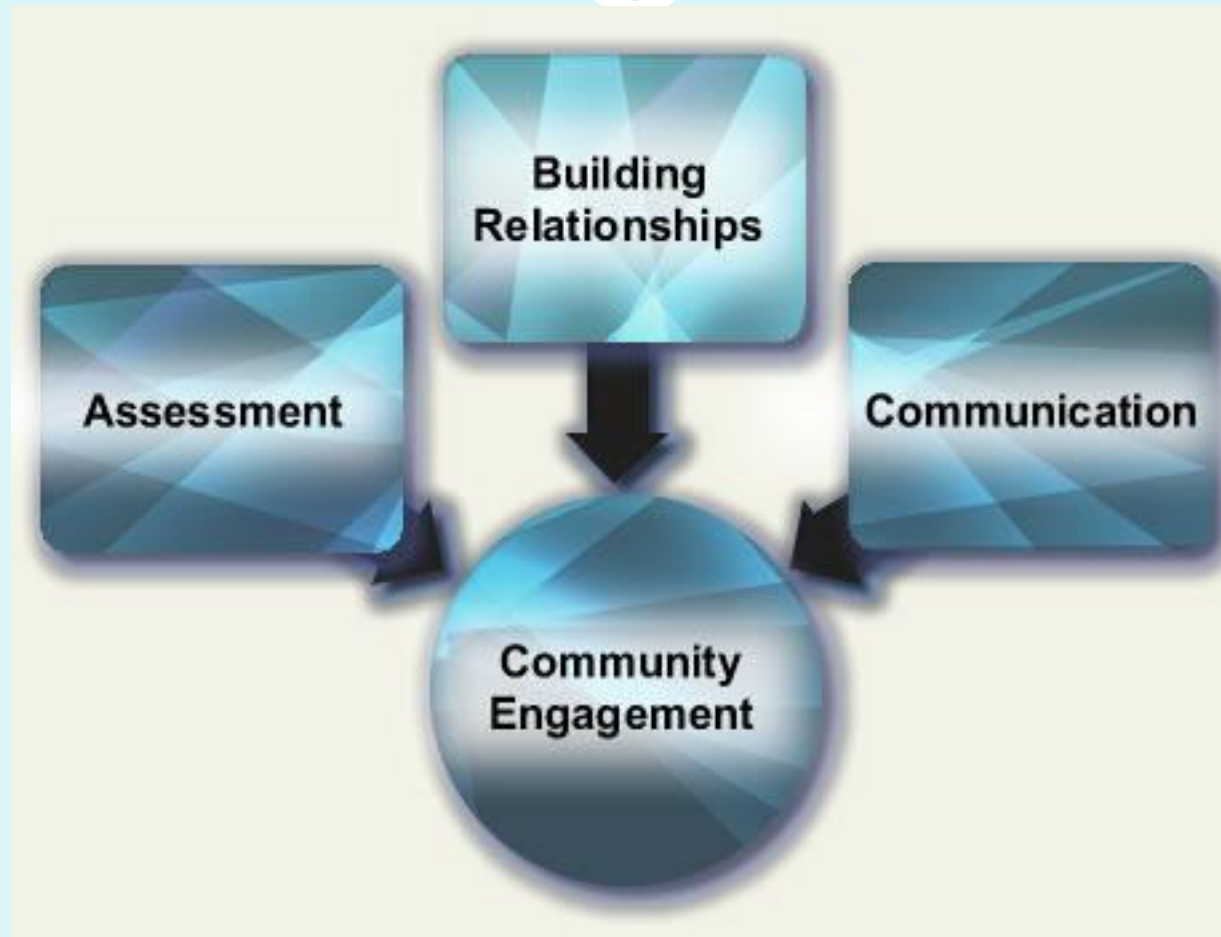
Authentic Partnerships – continued

- Objectives and expectations are clear

- Written agreements exist (e.g., MOA)

- Community partners' contributions are clear & are not in place to establish "buy-in"

- Values are clear (e.g., respect, sensitivity of all partners)

Labonte R. (1997) Community, Community Development and the Forming of Authentic Partnerships: Some Critical Reflections. Chapter in Community Organizing & Community Building for Health. Minkler M ed. Rutgers University Press New Brunswick NJ.

Community Engagement Model
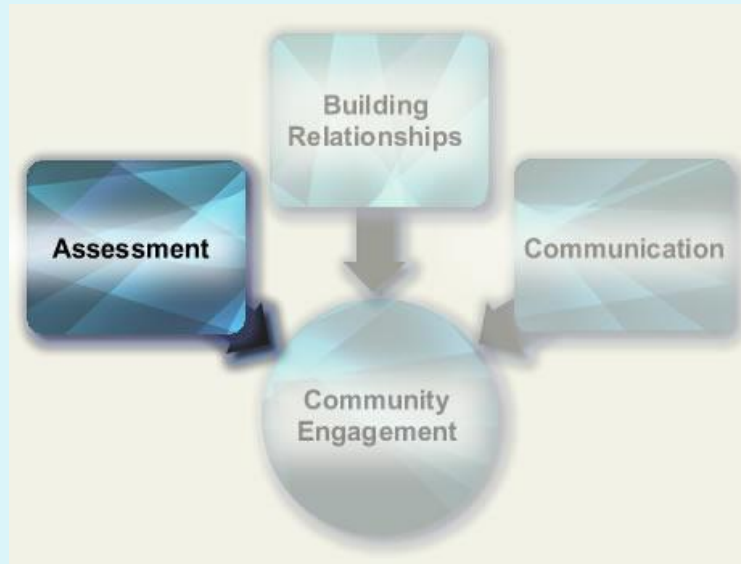
Community & Organizational Assessment

Community Research

- understand your present and future environment
- meet potential partners

Self Assessment

- Formal Policies, Mission, Vision &Values
- Standard operating procedures
- Trainings of staff & orientation

~ It is vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual ~ *Jeremy Bentham*

Community Assessment

- Questionnaires
- One on One Interviews
- Field Observation
- Ethnography
- Case Studies
- Focus Groups
- Community Mapping

Building Relationships

Partnerships combine the knowledge, wisdom and experience of complementary community agencies to solve shared health, social and economic challenges.
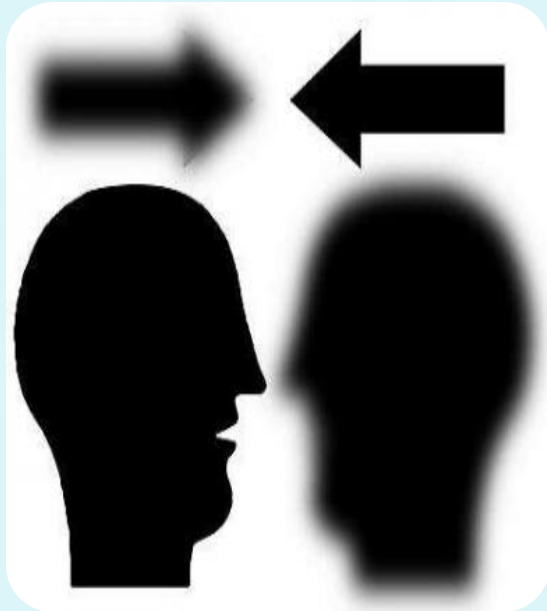
Building Relationships

- You also want partners that can offer financial or in-kind support (to reduce service expenses), while maintaining high service quality.

- In turn, you must be positioned to offer these same benefits to other organizations.

- Partner with your "competition."

- Make relationships that are reciprocal

"Those that say it can't be done should get out of the way of those doing it"
-Chinese Proverb

Communication

- Communication should be interactive - not about "selling"
- The outcome may include attracting new staff and board members, increasing referrals, attracting new fee-for-service clients, increasing your volunteer capacity or getting into new geographic markets.
- Writing, speaking, connecting with people one-on-one – are all effective communication methods that are relatively inexpensive.

Barriers leading to non-participation

1. Organizational approach to inclusion, diversity, openness
2. History & how it influences the present
3. Individual experiences and perceptions

How to address barriers:

- *Identify 1-3 above via partners*
- *Move forward through active participation & giving a voice to the community*
- *Have a strategy to develop action plan after insights & experiences are shared*

Communication Exercise

1. Organizational approach to inclusion, diversity, openness
2. History & how it influences the present
3. Individual experiences and perceptions

- *Identify 1-3 with your partners*
- *Move forward through active participation & giving a voice to the community*
- *Have a strategy to develop action plan after insights & experiences are shared*

Adapted from Cornelia Ramsey, PhD, MSPH, Center for Clinical and Translational Research, Virginia Commonwealth University

Bringing it all Together

- Cultural brokering-the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of differing backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change (Jezewski, 1990)

- A cultural broker acts as a go between, one who advocates on behalf of another individual or group (Jezewski & Sotnik, 2001)

An Example of Community Outreach and Collaboration to improve Health Disparities in Minority Children with Disabilities

2009 Collaboration between VCU's Partnership for People with Disabilities and the VDH resulted in

- ❖ VDH provided a grant for the PPD to hire 2 part-time cultural liaisons
- ❖ The project was established to address health disparities in both communities in the Commonwealth

What we did to assess our community's needs: Focus Groups

- 2010 Facilitated focus groups across the state

- Aimed to explore health care quality and disparities perceived by Hispanic and African American families of children with disabilities or special healthcare needs

- The participants were very candid

- Since the early 2000's there has been a partnership with VCU School of Gerontology and area CSBs, VDH, VBPD, and family volunteers—2 conf a year

Other Partnerships formed

- Latino and AA Autism Clinic Pilot in Partnership with Commonwealth Autism Services
  - To address "Latinos and African Americans are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with ASD at a later age, if at all, and with more severe symptoms or to being misdiagnosed with another condition, such as intellectual disability". 1-2.

- Partnered with VCU's Child Development Clinic
  - To work in collaboration with families in finding resources, information and accessing services after children are diagnosed with various conditions

  - The Building Bridges Conference—

1. Autism and DD Monitoring Network Surveillance Year 2008 Principal Investigators; CDC and prevention. Prevalence of ASD-Autism and DD Monitoring Network 14 sites US, 2008. MMWR Surveill Summ. 2012.61(3):1-19.
2. Palmer RF, Walker T, Mandell D, Bayles B. Miller CS. Explaining low rates of autism among Hispanic schoolchildren in Texas; Am J Public. 2010;100(2):270-272.